

CLAIMS

1. A content relay server for relaying a content between a content source apparatus and a content destination apparatus, said content relay server comprising:

5 an information storing unit operable to store identification information of the content destination apparatus and content information about a content that can be received by the content destination apparatus, the identification information and content information being associated with each other, and operable to store
10 source information about the content source apparatus and destination information about the content destination apparatus;

a content receiving unit operable to receive, from the content source apparatus, identification information of the content destination apparatus, a content associated with the identification
15 information, and source information about the content source apparatus;

a transfer judging unit operable to extract, from said information storing unit, content information associated with the received identification information of the content destination
20 apparatus, and judge, based on the content information, whether or not the received content can be received by the content destination apparatus;

a content transferring unit operable to transfer the received content to the content destination apparatus identified by the
25 identification information when said transfer judging unit judges that the content can be received; and

a transfer rejection notifying unit operable to provide notice of a transfer rejection to the content source apparatus based on the source information when said transfer judging unit judges that the
30 content cannot be received.

2. The content relay server according to Claim 1, further

comprising

an arrival advance notifying unit operable to provide advance notice to the content destination apparatus based on destination information when said transfer judging unit judges that the content cannot be received, the advance notice indicating that the content has arrived at said content relay server but cannot be transferred to the content destination apparatus.

3. The content relay server according to Claim 1, wherein:

said information storing unit is operable to store rejection information for rejecting a reception of a content transmitted from a specific source; and

said content relay server further comprises

a reception rejecting unit operable to judge whether or not the source information transmitted from the content source apparatus is included in the rejection information, and reject a reception of the content and provide notice of the reception rejection to the content source apparatus when the source information is included.

4. A content relay system for transmitting and receiving a content via a content relay server, said content relay system comprising:

a content transmitting apparatus having unique identification information and being operable to transmit a content;

a message displaying apparatus which is given an address associated with said content transmitting apparatus;

a content storing apparatus operable to store a content; and

a content relay server operable to relay a content, said content relay server comprising:

an information storing unit operable to store identification information of a content destination apparatus and content

information about a content that can be received by the content destination apparatus, the identification information and content information being associated with each other, and operable to store source information about a content source apparatus and destination information about the content destination apparatus;

a content receiving unit operable to receive, from the content source apparatus, identification information of the content destination apparatus, a content associated with the identification information, and source information about the content source apparatus;

a transfer judging unit operable to extract, from said information storing unit, content information associated with the received identification information of the content destination apparatus, and judge, based on the content information, whether or not the received content can be received by the content destination apparatus;

a content transferring unit operable to transfer the received content to the content destination apparatus identified by the identification information when said transfer judging unit judges that the content can be received; and

a transfer rejection notifying unit operable to provide notice of a transfer rejection to the content source apparatus based on the source information when said transfer judging unit judges that the content cannot be received.

5. The content relay system according to Claim 4, further comprising

a destination displaying apparatus operable to receive advance notice of a content arrival and display a message indicating the advance notice.

6. The content relay system according to Claim 4, wherein:

said the content storing apparatus further comprises
a content information update requesting unit operable to
provide notice of a change in the content information to said content
relay server when the content information about the content that
5 can be received has been changed; and

said content relay server further comprises
an information updating unit operable to update the content
information stored in said information storing unit upon request
from said content information update requesting unit.

10 7. A content relay method by which a content relay server relays
a content, the content relay server including an information storing
unit operable to store identification information of a content
destination apparatus and content information about a content that
15 can be received by the content destination apparatus, the
identification information and content information being associated
with each other, and operable to store source information about the
content source apparatus and destination information about the
content destination apparatus, said content relay method
20 comprising:

receiving, from the content source apparatus, identification
information of the content destination apparatus, a content
associated with the identification information, and source
information about the content source apparatus;

25 extracting, from the information storing unit, content
information associated with the received identification information
of the content destination apparatus, and judging, based on the
content information, whether or not the received content can be
received by the content destination apparatus;

30 transferring the received content to the content destination
apparatus identified by the identification information when it is
judged that the content can be received; and

providing notice of a transfer rejection to the content source apparatus based on the source information when it is judged that the content cannot be received.

- 5 8. A program for relaying a content between a content source apparatus and a content destination apparatus, said program comprising executable code operable to cause a computer to perform:

10 receiving, from the content source apparatus, identification information of the content destination apparatus, a content associated with the identification information, and source information about the content source apparatus;

15 extracting, from the information storing unit, content information associated with the received identification information of the content destination apparatus, and judging, based on the content information, whether or not the received content can be received by the content destination apparatus;

20 transferring the received content to the content destination apparatus identified by the identification information when it is judged that the content can be received; and

 providing notice of a transfer rejection to the content source apparatus based on the source information when it is judged that the content cannot be received.

- 25 9. The content relay server according to Claim 1, wherein:
 said information storing unit is operable to store rejection information for rejecting a reception of a content transmitted from a specific source; and
 said content relay server further comprises
30 a reception rejecting unit operable to judge whether or not the source information transmitted from the content source apparatus is included in the rejection information, and reject a

reception of the content.